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TAGS: [AMGT](#) [APER](#) [KSCA](#) [OTRA](#) [SENV](#) [TSPL](#) [BM](#)  
SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR A SCIENCE FELLOW IN BURMA

REF: STATE 35305

¶1. (SBU) Post requests that a Science Fellow from the Smithsonian Institution or the Environmental Protection Agency be placed at the U.S. Embassy in Rangoon to assess and prepare a detailed report on the regional environmental impact of the ruling military regime's policies, especially actions that unsustainably exploit Burma's natural resources to generate short-term revenue. Flooding, soil degradation, water pollution, erosion, wildlife trafficking, deforestation, habitat destruction, biodiversity reduction, and loss of endangered species all result from the Government of Burma's current policies. These policies damage not just Burma, but negatively affect the entire region.

¶2. (SBU) International attention is focused on the regional impact of the actions of Burma's ruling military regime. Their policies are causing increased flows of IDPs and cross-border refugees, promoting economic migration, enabling drug trafficking, and spreading highly infectious diseases, including HIV/AIDS, malaria and TB. New hydroelectric dam projects and massive over-logging in ethnic regions of Burma bordering other countries threaten to spread these problems further, as well as causing environmental degradation and widespread deforestation in biologically fragile environments. Despite growing international concern, little has been written about the environmental impact of Burma's development policies, and the added stresses they create on the sustainable environments of its neighbors. Information on these issues would be very valuable in bilateral and multilateral policy discussions, and could generate increased regional and international cooperation to promote more environmentally sensitive policy in Burma.

¶3. (SBU) Specific tasks could include initial assessment and analysis of the environmental and health impact of:

- existing dam projects and Burma's current plans to dam the Salween (Thanlwin) River;
- unregulated logging and resultant deforestation, particularly along the Chinese border;
- large agricultural projects and infrastructure development along the Thai and Chinese borders; and
- habitat loss on Burma's biodiversity and endangered species.

¶4. (U) The Science Fellow would be expected to travel within Burma researching these projects, as well as meet with international organizations and NGO officials in Rangoon. The Science Fellow may also consult with counterparts in Thailand and China.

¶5. (U) The most convenient time period is during dry season

to allow easier travel (any two month period between October and May), but we could accommodate someone outside this period. We recommend the Science Fellow get medical and security clearances and a visa well in advance to make maximum use of his/her time in Burma. Post will provide office space and support, in-country travel, housing, and other logistical support as needed.

16. (U) Embassy point of contact is Teresa Manlowe, Economic and EST Officer, who can be reached at ManloweTL@state.gov.  
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